

What is claimed is:

1. A collapsible container, comprising:

a plurality of rigid segments; and

means for connecting the rigid segments such that the rigid segments define a sidewall and such that the rigid segments are movable between an expanded position wherein the rigid segments cooperate with one another to form an object receiving space and a collapsed position wherein the sidewall is substantially flattened.

2. The collapsible container of claim 1 wherein the means for connecting comprises a flexible liner to which each of the rigid segments is connected.

3. The collapsible container of claim 2 wherein the flexible liner has an open upper end and a closed lower end.

4. The collapsible container of claim 3 wherein the flexible liner is fabricated of a waterproof material.

5. The collapsible container of claim 1 wherein the connecting means comprises a plurality of flexible members, each flexible member having a portion connected to one of the rigid segments and another portion connected to an adjacent rigid segment.

6. The collapsible container of claim 5 wherein each of the rigid segments is characterized as having an inner surface, an outer surface, a first of longitudinal edge and a second longitudinal edge, and wherein the flexible members are connected to the inner surface of the rigid segments so that the first longitudinal edge of one rigid segment abuttingly engages the second longitudinal edge of the adjacent rigid segment in the expanded position.

7. The collapsible container of claim 5 wherein each of the rigid segments is characterized as having an inner surface, an outer surface, and a first longitudinal edge and a second longitudinal edge, and wherein the flexible members are connected to the outer surface of the rigid segments so that the first longitudinal edge of one rigid segment abuttingly engages the second longitudinal edge of the adjacent rigid segment in the expanded position.

8. The collapsible container of claim 1 wherein the connecting means comprises a plurality of living hinges, each living hinge having one portion connected to one of the rigid segments and another portion connected to an adjacent rigid segment.

9. The collapsible container of claim 8 wherein each of rigid segments is characterized as having an inner surface, an

outer surface, a first longitudinal edge and a second longitudinal edge, and wherein the living hinges are connected to the inner surface of the rigid segments so that the first longitudinal edge of one rigid segment abuttingly engages the second longitudinal edge of the adjacent rigid segment in the expanded position.

10. The collapsible container of claim 8 wherein each of the rigid segments is characterized as having an inner surface, an outer surface, and a first longitudinal edge and a second longitudinal edge, and wherein the living hinges are connected to the outer surface of the rigid segments so that the first longitudinal edge of one rigid segment abuttingly engages the second longitudinal edge of the adjacent rigid segment in the expanded position.

11. The collapsible container of claim 1 wherein the rigid segments are constructed of a material selected from the group consisting of ceramic, clay, concrete, plastic, metal, rock, or combinations thereof.

12. The collapsible container of claim 1 wherein each of the rigid segments has an inner surface, an outer surface, and a first longitudinal edge and a second longitudinal edge, and wherein each of the longitudinal edges is angled such that the first longitudinal edge of one rigid segment abuttingly engages the

second longitudinal edge of the adjacent rigid segment in the expanded position.

13. The collapsible container of claim 1 wherein each of the rigid segments has an inner surface, an outer surface, a first longitudinal edge, and a second longitudinal edge, and wherein the first longitudinal edge has an inner lip extending therefrom and the second longitudinal edge has an outer lip extending therefrom such that the inner lip of the first longitudinal edge overlaps the outer lip of the second longitudinal edge of an adjacent rigid segment when the rigid segments are in the expanded position.

14. The collapsible container of claim 1 wherein the rigid segments have a substantially planar configuration.

15. The collapsible container of claim 1 wherein the rigid segments have a substantially curved configuration.

16. A collapsible container, comprising:

a flexible bottom panel;

a plurality of rigid segments; and

means for connecting the rigid segments to one another and to the flexible bottom panel such that the rigid segments define a sidewall and such that the rigid segments and the flexible bottom panel are movable between an expanded position wherein the rigid segments cooperate with one

another and the flexible bottom panel to form an object receiving space and a collapsed position wherein the sidewall and the bottom panel are substantially flattened.

17. The collapsible container of claim 16 wherein the means for connecting comprises a flexible liner to which each of the rigid segments is connected.

18. The collapsible container of claim 17 wherein the flexible bottom panel is a portion of the flexible liner.

19. The collapsible container of claim 17 wherein the flexible liner has an open upper end and a closed lower end, and wherein the flexible bottom panel is the closed lower end of the flexible liner.

20. The collapsible container of claim 18 wherein the flexible liner is fabricated of a waterproof material.

21. The collapsible container of claim 16 wherein the connecting means comprises plurality of flexible members, each flexible member having one portion connected to one of the rigid segments and another portion connected to an adjacent rigid segment.

22. The collapsible container of claim 16 wherein the connecting means comprises a living hinge having one portion connected to one of the rigid segments and another portion connected to an adjacent rigid segment.

23. The collapsible container of claim 16 wherein the rigid segments are constructed of a material selected from the group consisting of ceramic, clay, concrete, plastic, metal, rock, or combinations thereof.

24. The collapsible container of claim 16 wherein each of the rigid segments has an inner surface, an outer surface, and a peripheral edge, and wherein the peripheral edge is angled such that the outer peripheral edges of adjacent rigid segments abuttingly engage when the rigid segments are in the expanded position.

25. The collapsible container of claim 16 further comprising:
support means positioned in the object receiving space for supporting the rigid segments in the expanded position.

26. The collapsible container of claim 25 wherein the support means is a flower pot.

27. The collapsible container of claim 25 wherein the support means is an insert configured to conform the contour of the inner

side of the rigid segments when the rigid segments are in the expanded position.

28. A pot assembly, comprising:

a base member having a bottom surface, a top surface, and a groove formed along an outer perimeter thereof; and
a plurality rigid segments having one end removably disposed in the groove of the base member arranged and circumferentially about the base member to form a sidewall, the sidewall cooperating with the base member to define an object receiving space, each rigid segment having a lower edge, an upper edge, a first side edge, and a second side edge, the first side edge of each rigid segment being detachably linked to the second side edge of an adjacent rigid segment with the rigid segments disposed in the groove of the base.

29. The pot assembly of claim 28 wherein the first side edge of each rigid segment has a tongue and the second side edge of each rigid segment has a groove for receiving the tongue of the adjacent rigid segment.

30. The pot assembly of claim 28 further comprising an annular clip positioned over the upper edge of the rigid segments so as to link each of the rigid segments together.

31. The pot assembly of claim 30 further comprising a flexible sheet of material having a portion secured between the upper edge of the rigid segments and the clip and another portion extending from the rigid segments so as to define a skirt.

32. The pot assembly of claim 28 further comprising a plurality of clips, each clip positioned over the upper edge of adjacent rigid segments so as to link the rigid segments together.

33. The pot assembly of claim 32 further comprising a flexible sheet of material having a portion secured between the upper edge of the rigid segments and the clips and another portion extending from the rigid segments so as to define a skirt.

34. The pot assembly of claim 28 further comprising an elastic ring member positioned in the object receiving space and biased against the interior surface of the sidewall formed by the rigid segments.

35. The pot assembly of claim 34 further comprising a flexible sheet of material having a portion secured between the rigid segments and the ring member and another portion extending from the rigid segments so as to define a skirt.

36. The pot assembly of claim 34 wherein each of the rigid segments has a groove formed on an interior surface thereof which is alignable with the grooves of the other rigid segments to form and annular groove in the interior surface of the sidewall adapted to receive the elastic ring member.

37. The pot assembly of claim 28 further comprising an elastic ring member biased against the exterior surface of the sidewall formed by the rigid segments.

38. The pot assembly of claim 37 further comprising a flexible sheet of material having a portion secured between the rigid segments and the ring member and another portion extending from the rigid segments so as to define a skirt.

39. The pot assembly of claim 37 wherein each of the rigid segments has a groove formed on an exterior surface thereof which is alignable with the grooves of the other rigid segments to form and annular groove in the exterior surface of the sidewall adapted to receive the elastic ring member.

40. The pot assembly of claim 39 wherein the groove is defined by a peripheral lip of the base member and an insert positioned in a lower end of the object receiving space, the insert dimensioned such that the lower edge of the rigid segments are

supportingly received between the peripheral lip of the base member
and a peripheral edge of the insert.